

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a federal agency responsible for managing the public lands in accordance with federal law, regulation and policy in order to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), BLM's organic act, directs the BLM to prepare land use plans which provide guidance, with public input, on how the public lands are to be managed. All subsequent activities on the BLM-managed public lands must be in conformance with the approved land use plan.

The Forest Service (FS) provides overall leadership in forest and forest-range conservation, development, and use. This involves determination of forestry conditions and requirements, and recommendations of policies and programs needed to keep the Nation's private and public lands fully productive. The FS mission, as set forth by law, is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.

Congresswoman Mary Bono introduced legislation (H.R. 3676) to the 106th Congress for the establishment of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument (National Monument) in order "to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and to secure now and for future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife, landforms and natural and cultural resources of these mountains and to recreate therein." A companion bill (S. 2784) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Dianne Feinstein. The passage of this legislation and the signing into law by President Clinton on October 24, 2000 created a 271,400 acre National Monument (Appendix A).

The National Monument encompasses 89,500 acres of United States Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, 65,000 acres of United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) lands, 19,800 acres of Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians lands, 12,900 acres of California Department of Parks and Recreation lands, 28,900 acres of California Department of Fish and Game lands, 7,500 acres of other State of California agencies lands, and 38,500 acres of private land (Figure 3).

This bipartisan legislation established the first congressionally designated National Monument to be jointly managed by the BLM and the Forest Service. The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-351), hereinafter referred to as the National Monument Act of 2000, affects only Federal lands and Federal interests located within the established boundaries. The BLM and the Forest Service will jointly manage Federal lands in the National Monument in

consultation and cooperation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, other Federal agencies, State agencies and local governments to protect the National Monument's biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, scientific, and scenic values.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument is located in Southern California, approximately 100 miles east of Los Angeles. The National Monument has a dramatic landscape rising abruptly from near sea level in the valley to the San Jacinto Peak at 10,834 feet. Five distinct "life zones," from Sonoran Desert to Arctic Alpine provide exceptionally diverse biological resources. The National Monument runs northwest to southeast along the edge of the Coachella Valley, a broad, low elevation valley comprising the westernmost limits of the Sonoran Desert. Nine cities, (Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells, Palm Desert, La Quinta, Indio, Coachella and Desert Hot Springs) lie within this valley--an area of rapid growth and increasing urbanization. As noted in the Act, the National Monument provides a "picturesque backdrop" and an abundance of recreational opportunities that are important regional economic resources for the Coachella Valley and mountain communities.

The total planning area encompasses approximately 271,400 acres. The National Monument planning decisions will only affect Federal lands as described above. However, the management of the National Monument will be a cooperative effort that encourages collaboration between the BLM, Forest Service, other Federal and State agencies, and Tribal and local governments.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The National Monument Act of 2000 requires BLM and the Forest Service to complete a National Monument Management Plan (Management Plan) by October 24, 2003, that establishes strategies to fulfill the following needs:

- 1) Preserve the national significant biological cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument;
- 2) Secure now and for future generations, the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife land forms, and natural and cultural resources, and to recreate therein,
- 3) to manage the National Monument in coordination, cooperation and consultation with private interests, the local advisory committee, with Federal, Tribal, State, and local government agencies, and with interested owners of private property and holders of valid existing rights within the National Monument boundary; and
- 4) Coordinate BLM and Forest Service management activities across jurisdictional boundaries.

The National Monument is comprised of Federal lands subject to prior congressional designations for which land management plan revisions have recently been completed (BLM) or are in progress (Forest Service). These other planning processes are to be considered in the National Monument Management Plan to ensure consistent resource

allocation decisions. Towards that end, the Management Plan will serve as a bridge linking the separate BLM and Forest Service Planning processes, and will focus only on issues not addressed by the recently completed amendment or plans in progress as described below.

The portion of the National Monument administered by the Forest Service is part of the San Bernardino National Forest, established in 1927 by Act of Congress. The Forest Service is currently revising a Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the San Bernardino National Forest (SBNF), prepared under authority of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the National Forest Management Act of 1976. The revised LRMP will supercede the existing Land and Resource Management Plan completed in 1989. The National Monument Management Plan will serve as an operational guide tiered to the approved Land and Resource Management Plan.

The portion of the National Monument administered by the BLM is also part of the California Desert Conservation Area, established through the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). For BLM-administered lands, the National Monument Management Plan will serve as both a Resource Management Plan (RMP; prepared in accordance with Section 202 of FLPMA and associated BLM policies) and an implementation level plan (prepared in accordance with BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1610-1). On December 27, 2002, BLM approved the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan Amendment for the Coachella Valley, which addresses BLM lands within the National Monument. For the purposes of this National Monument RMP, those recently approved decisions will be brought forward unchanged into this National Monument Plan, and will not be reevaluated.

The Federal lands within the National Monument are also part of a multi-jurisdictional planning effort, led by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments. Upon completion, the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) will establish a reserve system and conservation strategy for State and Federally listed species; local jurisdictions will obtain State and Federal "take" permits, facilitating urban development outside the reserve system. The BLM and Forest Service have made a commitment to the local jurisdictions to be partners in support of the CVMSHCP. The National Monument Management Plan is to be consistent with that commitment and subsequent agreements made through the CVMSHCP.

The purpose of this Management Plan is to fulfill the aforementioned needs by establish a comprehensive interagency approach to land and resource management within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and to provide a mechanism for communication, consultation, and coordination of activities.

BLM planning regulations will be used to develop this Management Plan, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between Forest Service and BLM (Refer to Appendix J of the complete plan). In addition to planning requirements of Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require that planning criteria to be identified to guide the development of all management plans. Planning criteria ensure that plans address pertinent issues and unnecessary data collection and analysis are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable laws, agency guidance, public comments, and coordination with other Federal, State and local governments, and Native American tribes. The planning criteria used in developing the

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Management Plan are as follows:

PLANNING CRITERIA

In addition to the standard suite of laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and BLM and Forest Service Manuals and policies which guide all BLM and Forest Service planning efforts, the following criteria were specifically established through the National Monument Act of 2000 to guide development of the National Monument Management Plan. A complete version of the legislation can be found in Appendix A.

National Monument Act of 200

- a. The Plan will be cooperatively written between the BLM and the Forest Service and one combined plan will include management guidance to both Federal agencies. For the planning process, the BLM Planning Regulations will be applied to both BLM and Forest Service lands within the National Monument. The Plan will be completed in compliance with applicable laws.
- b. The Plan will establish the guidance upon which the BLM and the Forest Service will rely in managing the National Monument.
- c. The National Monument Planning Team will work cooperatively with the State of California, Tribal governments, County and municipal governments, other Federal agencies, and all other interested groups, agencies and individuals, and will provide the framework for entering into special agreements and issuing special use permits for the purposes of management, interpretation, research and education regarding resources of the National Monument.
- d. The Plan will emphasize the resources that the National Monument legislation identified for protection and preservation. It will also identify opportunities and priorities for research and monitoring related to the key resource values for which the National Monument was created.
- e. The Plan will recognize valid existing rights within the National Monument. The Plan will also outline the process the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service will use to address applications or notices filed after the completion of the Plan on land use authorizations.
- f. The Plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage hunting and fishing within the National Monument.
- g. The Plan will address transportation and access, as appropriate to protect resources and manage visitation, including motorized vehicle use on approved routes.
- h. The Plan will address the need for providing adequate access to State and private lands.
- i. The Plan will address the maintenance of roadways, jeep trails, and paths.
- j. The Plan will set forth the goals and objectives for managing recreational activities to provide for enjoyment of visitor experiences consistent with the objectives of the key resource values and will include provisions to continue to authorize the recreational use of the National Monument, including hiking, camping, mountain biking, sightseeing, horseback riding, consistent with the National Monument Act of 2000 and other applicable law.
- k. The Plan shall address need for public utility rights-of-way outside of

wilderness.

- I. The Plan shall allow for administering grazing leases/permits in accordance with existing law and regulations. The National Monument designation shall not affect the Wellman Family grazing permit.
- m. The Plan will not restrict military, commercial and general aviation overflights. Commercial air tours (sightseeing) over the National Monument are prohibited, unless such operation was conducted prior to February 16, 2000.
- n. The Plan shall address the criteria to be used in acquiring land or easements within the National Monument.
- o. The Plan shall continue to provide for the exchange of lands between the BLM and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- p. The Plan shall document the National Monument Advisory Committee's role in advising the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to the preparation and implementation of the National Monument Management Plan.
- q. The Plan shall be in compliance with management of designated Wilderness areas, which remain subject to the Wilderness Act (Clarifying Amendments, Public Law 106-434; Nov. 6, 2000).

Planning Criteria according to BLM and Forest Service Planning Guidance, Laws, Regulations and Policies

There is a broad range of Federal laws, regulations, and policies guiding development of this Management Plan, including, but not limited to:

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
- The Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of June 12, 1960
- The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of August 17, 1974
- The National Forest Management Act of October 22, 1976
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 7 (Agriculture); Title 16 (Conservation); Title 29 (Labor); and Title 43 (Public Lands).
- CFR Title 43 (1610) (BLM's planning guidance and regulations); BLM Manual 1601
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and Title 40 CFR Part 1500
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
- Wilderness Act of 1964
- California Desert Protection Act of 1994
- Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Native American Consultation per Executive Orders 12866, 13084 et al.,
- Protocol Agreement (1998) with State Historic Preservation Office,
- The President's National Energy Policy (Executive Order 13212)
- Other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

Laws authorizing management activities of BLM

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) establishes the authority and provides guidance for how the public lands are to be managed by the BLM. In managing public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield, FLPMA requires that the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource and archeological values be protected. Nothing in the

proposed plan shall have the effect of terminating any validly issued right-of-way, or customary operation, maintenance, repair and replacement activities in existing right-of-ways on BLM lands.

Laws authorizing management activities of the Forest Service

The Forest Service administers and manages the National Forest System lands in accordance with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of June 12, 1960; The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of August 17, 1974; and the National Forest Management Act of October 22, 1976. Nothing in the proposed plan shall have the effect of terminating any validly issued right-of-way, or customary operation, maintenance, repair and replacement activities in existing right-of-ways on Forest Service lands.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

This legislation established a national policy to maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans. NEPA established the Council on Environmental Quality to coordinate environmental matters at the Federal level and advise the President on such matters. The law requires all Federal actions and could have significant impact on the environment be subject to review by Federal, Tribal, State and local environmental authorities, as well as affected parties and interested citizens.

Additional descriptions of laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and BLM and Forest Service manual and policy direction can be found in Chapter One of the National Monument Management Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

In addition to the planning criteria presented above, further guidance for the development of the National Monument Management Plan is provided by consideration of other planning efforts and the scope of issues that those efforts are addressing. So as not to address topics that other planning efforts are addressing and to further refine the scope of this Management Plan, the summary of completed and ongoing planning efforts is provided. The following Federal, State, Local, and Tribal land use plans “are germane in the development of land use plans for public lands.” [Federal Land Policy Management Act Sec. 202(c)(9)].

The National Monument was designated after the initiation of both the BLM CDCA Plan Amendment process and the Forest Service San Bernardino National Forest Plan Revision process. As the land within the National Monument also falls within the planning areas of the CDCA and the Forest Service Plan Revision, planning issues remaining to be addressed within the National Monument are limited in scope. The National Monument Plan tiers to the recently amended CDCA Plan Amendment and the existing San Bernardino National Forest Plan (1989) and will incorporate by reference the land use level decisions brought forward by these planning efforts. Once future efforts are completed, these additional guiding actions will be included in the National Monument Plan through plan maintenance or amendment as appropriate.

The San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (SBNF LRMP)(1989) and the Forest Plan Revision (in progress) for the San Bernardino National Forest

All actions approved in the National Monument Plan must be in conformance with the approved plan for the San Bernardino National Forest (1989, as amended). Forest Service land and resource management plans establish land use allocations similar to a city's General Plan. The National Monument Plan will be a strategic and operational plan from a Forest Service perspective. Land use allocation alternatives for Forest Service-managed lands within the boundary of the National Monument were discussed at public meetings held in conjunction with the Forest Service planning process. Because the San Bernardino National Forest Plan Revision will not be completed at the time of publication of the National Monument Plan, actions proposed through the National Monument Management Plan on National Forest Service lands within the National Monument must be consistent with the existing land use plan published in 1989 and where no actions are proposed the existing land use plan guidance applies. Future Amendments and Plan Maintenance to the National Monument Management Plan will incorporate by reference any future revisions to the San Bernardino Management Plan.

Issues being addressed through the Forest Plan Revision (in progress, estimated public draft due Fall 2003)

- General zoning for recreation use. Potential Recreation Opportunity Spectrum designations include primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, and rural.
- Management strategies for threatened and endangered species, including bighorn sheep.
- Strategic direction regarding the management for motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities.
- Recommendations to Congress regarding public request for designation of Palm Canyon as a Wild and Scenic River and additional wilderness designations near Pyramid Peak/Palm Canyon area.

BLM's California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment (CDCA) for the Coachella Valley

The *California Desert Conservation Area Plan* (CDCA Plan, 1980, as amended) provides land use plan guidance for the entire California Desert Conservation Area. The CDCA Plan has undergone numerous minor amendments over the past 20 years, and is currently undergoing major amendments. The Coachella Valley portion of the CDCA was most recently amended in December 2002. All CDCA Plan land use allocations pertaining to lands within the National Monument shall be brought forward into the National Monument Plan. A list of the actions that are brought forward is provided in this Executive Summary as Table ES-3. Refer to the text of Chapter One for additional description of issues being addressed through other BLM planning.

Issues brought forward to the National Monument through recent BLM CDCA Plan Amendment (completed December 2002)

- Wild and Scenic River eligibility
- Visual Resource Management (VRM) objectives
- Multiple-use classification
- Regional land health standards, Air quality management prescriptions, and Habitat conservation objectives
- Fire management categories and responses
- Land exchange, sale and acquisition criteria
- Communication sites and utilities development
- Wild horse and burro management and grazing management
- Motorized-vehicle area designations
- Motorized-vehicle route designations, including Dunn Road

- Stopping, parking and vehicle camping restrictions
- Recovery strategy for Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP)/ Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP)

The National Monument plan shall be consistent with the approved Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Area Plan (CVMSHCP) to the legal extent feasible. To ensure consistency with the CVMSHCP, BLM has amended its own California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan. Any actions BLM commits to for the CVMSHCP Implementing Agreement must be in conformance with the CDCA Plan (1980, as amended). In 1996, the BLM signed a Memorandum of Understanding along with nine Coachella Valley cities, Riverside County, state and other Federal agencies to initiate preparation of the CVMSHCP. The purpose of the CVMSHCP is to utilize a landscape-based approach to provide for the long-term conservation of multiple sensitive species and their habitats, while streamlining “take” permitting processes. While the CVMSHCP process is primarily geared towards resolving private and city-county planning issues, Federal participation is often necessary to achieve landscape-level species protection for the planning area within Federal ownership.

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Trails Management Plan.

As part of the CVMSHCP, a trails management plan for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains is being proposed. Trails management that is coordinated across jurisdictions will be far more effective in both supporting recovery of bighorn sheep populations and providing recreation opportunities for the public.

Issues being addressed through the CVMSHCP/Trails Plan for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains (Estimated Public Draft Summer 2003)

- Trail use (Non-motorized trail access: hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding)
- Cross-country travel
- Camping
- Dogs in Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat
- New trail development
- Trail rerouting
- Trail decommissioning and removal
- Murray Hill Facilities
- Adaptive Management process based on biological resource monitoring information

California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Santa Rosa Mountains Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (1980): A Sikes Act Project

This Plan was jointly prepared and approved by the BLM and the State of California Resources Agency, Department of Fish and Game in 1980. It described shared wildlife and habitat management objectives, as well as actions to implement those objectives. The California Department of Fish and Game Commission listed bighorn sheep in the Peninsular Ranges as “rare” in 1971 and changed that to “threatened” in 1984 under the California Endangered Species Act. In addition, bighorn sheep in the Peninsular Ranges are a fully protected species under California State Law. Much of the Sikes Act Plan has been completed, has been affected by changes in law or conditions on the ground, or will need to be updated to ensure consistency with amendments to the CDCA

Plan and recent designation of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. **No Revisions to this Plan are proposed in the near future.**

The Recovery Plan for the Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep

The Peninsular Ranges population of bighorn sheep (PRBS; *Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) was listed as federally endangered in 1998. In October of 2000, the USFWS completed the *Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep Recovery Plan* which recommends actions to recover and protect this listed species. In February 2001, the USFWS designated critical habitat for the PRBS. Through the trails management plan element of the CVMSHCP, a range of alternatives will be considered that represents different approaches to trails management recommendations expressed in the Recovery Plan. This plan has relevance to the National Monument Management Plan because 187,685 acres of Essential Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat occurs within the National Monument. **The Recovery Plan identified trails and areas with potential conflicts that should be addressed in an interagency trails management plan and provided guidance for PRBS management.**

Agua Caliente Tribal Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

The Tribal HCP establishes (1) a Mountains and Canyons Conservation area (MCCA) in which (a) certain lands will be dedicated to the Habitat Preserve, and (b) general and species-specific conservation measures will be imposed on Covered Projects and /or implemented by the Tribe, and (2) a Valley Floor Conservation Area (VFCA) from which (a) funding will generally be required for acquisition and management of additional Habitat Preserve lands, and (b) additional conservation program includes avoidance and minimization measures, assurances for establishment of the Habitat Preserve, adaptive management and monitoring, implementation and funding, amendment procedures and conditions for changed and unforeseen circumstances. Because Agua Caliente managed lands fall within the bounds of the National Monument and because collaboration with the Tribe is specifically outlined through National Monument legislation, actions proposed within this National Monument Management Plan would be consistent with the Tribal HCP to the legal extent feasible. Issues from the Agua Caliente Tribal Habitat Conservation Plan are provided in the text of Chapter One.

General Plans developed by the State of California, Municipalities and Riverside County, Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority, Agua Band of Cahuilla Indians (Indian Canyon General Plan)

To the extent legally feasible, the National Monument Plan shall be consistent with the approved plan for each jurisdiction that falls within the bounds of the National Monument (43 CFR 1610.3-2), including General Plans developed by Mt. San Jacinto State Park, Anza Borrego Desert State Park, local municipalities and Riverside County, Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority Plans and the Indian Canyons General Plan developed by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. **To the extent legally feasible, the National Monument Plan shall be consistent with the approved plan for each jurisdiction that falls within the bounds of the National Monument.**

ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS PLAN AS ALTERNATIVES AND STRATEGIES

After applying the planning criteria provided above to the types of issues brought forward during scoping, and taking into consideration recently completed plans, plans in progress, and existing plans that provide guidance, a set of issues that this National Monument Management Plan will address was developed.

The following listing of issues reflects the scope of planning decisions that this Management Plan will address through strategies and alternatives in Chapter 2.

- a. How can we balance the protection and preservation of biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values while providing multiple use and enjoyment of the National Monument?
- b. How will the National Monument affect private property?
- c. What types of casual and authorized uses will continue to be allowed within the National Monument?
- d. How will increased visitor use be monitored and managed including providing safe passage for vehicles and bicycles along Highway 74?
- e. How will the National Monument Plan be adaptive in response to changing needs or status through time?
- f. How will adequate information be provided to the public, to facilitate appropriate use of the National Monument, and to foster enjoyment and understanding of the National Monument resources?
- g. How will animal and plant pests, including exotic, invasive species, non-native or noxious weeds and uncontrolled and feral dogs, be managed?
- h. How will public safety be coordinated within the National Monument?
- i. How will fire suppression and fuels management be coordinated within the National Monument?
- j. What are the criteria for land tenure adjustment (acquisition, exchange, disposal) from willing parties within the National Monument?

B. ALTERNATIVES

The range of alternatives accommodates the range of reasonable management strategies that could resolve the identified public issues and management concerns for management of the National Monument. These issues and concerns were discussed in the Chapter One. All of the alternatives considered in detail are consistent with the overriding purpose for which the National Monument was created—the protection and preservation of the biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, scientific, and scenic values. Consistent with the identified issues and concerns and the overriding purpose of the National Monument, alternatives for National Monument management were formulated to address a range of uses that are not being addressed through another forum as described in Chapter One.

The range of alternatives was structured to range from less intensive to more intensive management. Refer Table ES-1 for a summary of the actions within each alternative and refer to the complete text in Chapter 2 for a full description of actions within each alternative.

Alternative A provides the **least intensive management** approach and allows for the greatest recreational use possible to propose through this Management Plan. Specifically, this alternative provides for hang gliding throughout the National Monument, dispersed recreational shooting of firearms, unleashed pets allowed outside of Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat, and no requirement for a permit for parking on Forest Service or BLM lands within the National Monument would be required.

Alternative B provides for **moderate management** and represents moderate recreation use and more intensive management guidance than is proposed in Alternative A, but less restrictive than Alternative C. Hang gliding would be prohibited in Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat, recreational shooting of firearms would be limited to

designated areas, leashed pets would be allowed outside of Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat, and no requirement for a permit for parking on Forest Service lands within the National Monument would be required.

Alternative C provides the **most intensive management** and includes limits to some recreational activities to protect and enhance National Monument resource values. Hang gliding and recreational shooting would be prohibited (hunting would not be affected consistent with California Department of Fish and Game), pets would only be allowed at developed facilities and on paved surfaces outside of Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat, a parking fee/permit would be developed for BLM lands and the current Adventure Pass required for Forest Service would continue to be required.

Combined Strategies : Alternative A, B, and C

The nature of some strategies presented is that they are general enough that they do not lend themselves to a range of options. There are not a lot of reasonable options with which to develop more than one alternative for these areas. This is reflected in the text as a combined Alternative (Alternative A, B, and C) and impacts to the existing management are developed by comparing the strategy to the No Action. This Management Plan proposes the following Strategies (identified as a combined Alternative A, B, and C) for the following areas:

- Management of Noxious, Invasive, and Non-Native Species
- Management of Special Status Species
- Management of Biological Monitoring
- Management Cultural Resources
- Management of Recreational Resources – Recreational Paintball, Pacific Crest Trail National Scenic Trail, and Management of Feral and Uncontrolled Domestic Animals
- Management of Geologic Resources
- Management of Educational Resources
- Management of Scientific Resources
- Management of Visitation, Facilities, and Uses
- Management of Private Property Concerns
- Management of Water Resources
- Management of Land Acquisitions
- Adaptive Management

Alternative D provides the **No Action Alternative**, or the existing management. The No Action Alternative describes the current management situation on Federal lands, which consists of the BLM-managed lands within the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office and Forest Service-managed lands within the San Jacinto Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest. This management for BLM-managed public lands is guided by the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (1980, as amended), and for Forest Service-managed lands is guided by the San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (SBNF LRMP) (1989). Additional non-discretionary direction specified in the National Monument legislation also applies. The No Action Alternative does not provide or create opportunities for enhancement of the National Monument values beyond the immediate protective measures of the enabling legislation. The No Action Alternative allows the reader to compare the current management with various strategies for future management (Alternatives A, B, C). Descriptions of the current management are provided throughout the chapter under the heading of Alternative D No Action Alternative.

A summary of the Alternatives can be found in Table ES-1 Executive Summary of Alternatives. Only actions that are proposed through this plan are summarized in Table ES-1. The Preferred Plan is represented as highlighted portions of the Table ES-1. Refer to the full text of version of this document for a complete description of the Preferred Plan and range of alternatives. Land-use decisions determined through the BLM Coachella Valley California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment, last amended in December 2002 including motorized route and OHV designations, grazing decisions, proposals for Wild and Scenic River designations and Area of Critical Environmental Concern can be found in Table ES-3 Summary of CDCA Plan Amendment Decisions applicable to Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

C. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A description of the existing management and current guidelines and policies providing direction to BLM and Forest Service is provided in this section. Refer to the full text version of this document for a complete description of the current management on Federal lands within the National Monument.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A summary of the anticipated impacts of each of the alternatives for the National Monument Plan and is presented in Table ES-2. Refer to the full text version of this document for a complete description of potential impacts.

E. THE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Throughout this planning process, the BLM and Forest Service have strived to create an open planning process, such that opportunities for public input are not limited to the minimum requirements set by the BLM planning regulations and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This planning process was designed to engage and involve the public, local governments, state agencies, other federal agencies and Native American tribes with the lead planning agencies.

A Monument Advisory Committee was created in November 2001 consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the National Monument Act of 2000. The Monument Advisory Committee consists of 15 members representing each of the cities that border the Coachella Valley side of the National Monument, the Pinyon Community, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Riverside County, California State Parks, natural sciences expertise, a local conservation organization, a local developer or builder organization, the Coachella Mountains Conservancy, the Winter Park Authority (Palm Springs Tram). The purpose of the Monument Advisory Committee is to advise the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) with respect to the preparation and implementation of the management plan for the conservation and protection of the National Monument. In December 2002, the Advisory Committee presented a Report outlining recommendations to the BLM and Forest Service regarding Management Plan development. During the draft plan preparation period the Committee met eight times. The committee utilized work groups to develop concepts that were brought to the Advisory Committee for action and recommendations to the Agencies.

Public scoping meetings were held throughout the Coachella valley (Indio Senior Center – 02 May, 2003; Palm Springs Desert Museum – 04 May, 2003; Palm Desert City Hall – 15 May, 2003) and in the Mountain communities (Idyllwild Town Hall – 24 April, 2003; Pinyon Elks Lodge – 15 May, 2003). A total of 190 persons attended the public

meetings, with the largest meeting attendance being the Pinyon meeting. All meetings were designed to provide information and to capture public comments. Each meeting began with a 20 minute slide presentation providing: (1) a brief review of the National Monument; (2) the relationship of the National Monument plan to other ongoing planning efforts in the area; (3) preliminary planning issues; and (4) an overview of the planning process and timeline. Additional meetings were held in Fall 2002 to provide the public an opportunity to review the scoping comments that were collected during the scoping phase of the planning process. This Public Scoping Report was also posted on the National Monument webpage. Fall 2003 meetings were designed to inform the public how to read the scoping report and how to distinguish how public scoping comments were being addressed (via the National Monument Plan or via another related planning effort).

The BLM and Forest Service initiated government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes by letter in March 2002. This letter invited Native American participation and comment in the planning process. Interested tribes contacted BLM and Forest Service and become engaged in the development of the management plan through Monument Advisory Committee working group meetings, presentations to Tribal Councils, field trips to the Monument, and additional meetings throughout the scoping process. A second letter was sent to Tribes in November 2002 in continuance of BLM and Forest Service government-to-government consultation. The following tribes were invited to be a part of the planning process through the above means: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Augustine Band of Mission Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Mission Indians, Torres-Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians, and Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians.

BLM and Forest Service are also in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). An early notification and invitation to participate in identification of issues was submitted to the SHPO's office in March 2002. BLM and Forest Service will submit draft and final plans to SHPO for review and comment.

The BLM and Forest Service have been informally consulting with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish through Monument Advisory Committee meeting participation and identification of the timeline for the Monument Plan as it relates to other planning efforts resulting in a Biological Opinion. Formal consultation took place in August 2003.

In 2001, an Interagency Working Group was established to assist in proposed project development within the National Monument and in development of the National Monument Management Plan. The group consists of staff representatives from Forest Service, BLM, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Game, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Caltrans, Riverside County Sheriff, Desert Search and Rescue. The Group met numerous times to develop issue area content for the Management Plan and to discuss public scoping issues that were brought forward through the planning process. These meetings were an integral component of sharing community concerns raised through scoping with partner agencies within the National Monument.